

PERMANENT SECRETARY

D/PUS/5/1 (56)

21 June 2023

**Commodore (Royal Navy) Stephen Roberts**  
**Senior Responsible Owner for the T31 Programme**  
*Sent electronically*

## **APPOINTMENT AS SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OWNER FOR THE TYPE 31 PROGRAMME**

Dear Stephen,

### **Role, Responsibility, Authority and Accountability**

- 1. Role.** We are writing to confirm your appointment as Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) of the Type 31 Programme. It is recognised that you have been acting as interim SRO since November 2022 and have therefore been accountable for all the decisions made since this date. This letter, therefore, sets out your responsibility, authority, and accountability going forwards as well as the support that you can expect from the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA).
- 2. Responsibility.** Your responsibility as SRO is defined in the IPA's guidance on [Project delivery: The Role of the Senior Responsible Owner](#) and in the MoD Project Delivery Centre of Excellence's guidance on [The Role of the Senior Responsible Owner in Defence](#). You are to comply with the [Government Functional Standard for Project Delivery](#) and the [Government Project Delivery Framework](#), and you are expected to follow all relevant IPA guidance on project delivery. In addition, you should take every step to ensure that Ministers, the Accounting Officer and other senior leaders are fully informed of increasing risk or threats to delivery that might be considered capable of undermining the business case at the earliest opportunity even if outside the normal governance line or timings.
- 3.** The programme's objectives, outcomes and benefits are defined in the Programme Mandate; specific delivery requirements are defined within the programme's Business Cases and Approvals; and the assurance requirements are as detailed in the programme's Integrated Assurance and Approval Plan.

4. You are to allocate 50% of your time to your SRO responsibilities and you are to remain in post until April 2024 when you will have delivered against the following milestones:

- a. Combat System Integration Contract awarded to Preferred Supplier by May 2023.
- b. HMS VENTURER Tranche 1 Crewing Start by October 2023.
- c. Support Invitation To Negotiate issued by November 2023.

5. **Authority.** The department will grant you the authority you require to discharge your defined responsibilities as SRO, and thus deliver the programme mandate effectively. You are authorised to:

- a. Lead and champion the programme (including in public).
- b. In consultation with the Type 31 Sponsor, set the overall vision, strategic direction, and key delivery parameters for the programme.
- c. Determine the overall design of the programme and the temporary organisation that is needed to deliver it.
- d. Delegate<sup>1</sup> responsibility and authority as required within the programme team (including to those in sponsor, client, and market roles)<sup>2</sup> noting that accountability cannot be delegated.
- e. Approve business cases (subject to additional approval as required by spending controls)<sup>3</sup>.
- f. Exercise your authority to decide on the most appropriate course of action to resolve dispute beyond the boundary of the Programme Board.
- g. In consultation with the Type 31 Sponsor agree on changes required to any previously determined scope, providing it does not prevent achievement of the Key User Requirement and it remains within the bounds of both the programme mandate and the approved cost, time, and performance envelope.
- h. Challenge all interfacing projects, programmes and the wider operating environment on matters relating to the effective delivery of the programme.
- i. Engage directly with all internal and external stakeholders on programme matters.
- j. Approve the programme's access to risk funding within the approved cost envelope.

6. If you do not have the authority you need to discharge the role effectively, you are to inform us immediately.

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<sup>1</sup> Noting certain delegations come through other routes

<sup>2</sup> As defined in the IPA Project Routemap.

<sup>3</sup> Authority to approve expenditure is provided through a separate financial delegation.

7. **Accountability.** You are accountable to the MoD Accounting Officer and Parliament with oversight provided by the 1<sup>st</sup> Sea Lord, as the Top Level Budget Holder for the Royal Navy, and for ensuring that the Type 31 Programme remains affordable, meets its objectives, delivers the projected outcome<sup>4</sup>, and realises the required benefit as defined in the Programme Mandate. Should you be unable to deliver against the requirement then you should escalate to me, as Accounting Officer, through the 1<sup>st</sup> Sea Lord and the Defence Major Programmes Portfolio Sponsor Group. Furthermore, you are to account for the action taken by the programme to Parliamentary Select Committees<sup>5</sup>, and for the programme's adherence to government policy to Ministers<sup>6</sup>. Your accountability is limited to the effective implementation of government policy, not the policy itself.

### **The Type 31 Programme**

8. The Type 31 procurement was the pathfinder for the Government's National Shipbuilding Strategy. The programme was launched in September 2017 and set out to deliver 5 ships against a baseline capability requirement for a general-purpose frigate. The contract for these 5 ships was placed in November 2019. T31 will be at the heart of the Royal Navy's surface fleet, deterring aggression and maintaining the security of the UK's interests. They will work alongside our Allies to deliver UK warship presence across the globe. Flexible and adaptable by design, Type 31 frigates will undertake missions such as interception and disruption of those using the sea for unlawful purposes, collect intelligence, Defence engagement and assisting those in need.

9. Type 31 is currently in the Manufacture phase, with 2 hulls in active production. The Type 31 programme is also in the process of placing a contract for the Combat Systems Integration work, as well as designing and acquiring the support and enduring training for the class.

10. The Type 31 programme has many dependencies with other MOD teams, projects and programmes. These are captured and managed through Business Agreements. These can be summarised as GFX dependencies with delivery agents, readiness dependencies and acceptance and Generation dependencies with supporting Royal Navy and Defence organisations.

### **Wider Departmental Support and Responsibilities**

11. The Type 31 programme forms part of the Defence Major Programmes Portfolio (DMPP) and the Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP). You must escalate to the DMPP Sponsor Group any RAIDO<sup>7</sup> that threaten the success or viability of the programme and bring any matter that could require an Accounting Officer Assessment to

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<sup>4</sup> A robust evaluation plan is key HMT requirement. Advice on providing this can be obtained from Defence Economics

<sup>5</sup> More information on this is set out in [Giving Evidence to Select Committees - Guidance for Civil Servants](#), sometimes known as the Osmotherly Rules.

<sup>6</sup> As set out in the [Civil Service Code](#).

<sup>7</sup> RAIDO: Risks, Assumptions, Issues, Dependencies and Opportunities.

the attention of the Accounting Officer<sup>8</sup>. You must report on the programme via the DMPP's Portfolio Management Reporting System (PMRS), which will be used to inform the Infrastructure and Projects Authority's annual report on the GMPP.

12. The department's delegated spending authority limits apply to your programme. Regardless, where expenditure is novel, contentious, repercussive, or likely to result in cost to other parts of the public sector, HM Treasury approval will be required. If in doubt, advice must be sought from departmental finance colleagues. The process for each programme approval must be agreed with departmental finance colleagues and the HM Treasury spending team, and you are to deliver the programme within the approved limits for your programme. Your financial delegation will be provided separately.
13. The department will assist you in securing the human and financial resources that are necessary to deliver the programme and by ensuring that the operating environment across the MoD and other government departments both enables and promotes effective programme delivery. Any support that you require in this regard is to be requested through the Navy Command in the first instance and you have access to the DMPP Sponsor Group at any time.
14. Notwithstanding your personal responsibility and accountability for the programme, you are to work collaboratively with all other departmental projects and programmes to manage dependencies and optimise the achievement of the department's wider objectives.
15. It is noted that you are accredited by the Major Projects Leadership Academy. The department's Head of Profession for project delivery is available to support and advise you, as are the IPA. In return, and as part of the department's cohort of major project leaders, you are to support your project delivery colleagues and participate in at least one assurance review of another GMPP every 12-months.
16. We wish you every success in your role as the Senior Responsible Owner of the T31 Programme.

Yours sincerely,



DAVID WILLIAMS  
Permanent Under Secretary, Ministry of Defence



NICK SMALLWOOD  
Chief Executive Officer, IPA

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<sup>8</sup> [Guidance on completing accounting officer assessments](#) for major projects is available from HM Treasury.